



News Release

Washington Department of Ecology news
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Ecology works to improve safety of underground storage tanks

OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) currently is seeking public comments on proposed changes to the state’s rule for preventing leaks from underground storage tanks.

The Legislature has directed Ecology to revise the current rule to include some recent changes in state and federal laws, and to improve compliance with the rule. Leaks from underground storage tanks (UST) can contaminate groundwater, the source of drinking water for 60 percent of Washington’s residents.

Ecology will accept comments through May 4, 2012. Comments also will be accepted during public hearings in April.

The state’s compliance program addresses the serious threat posed to human health and the environment by leaking underground storage tank systems containing petroleum and other hazardous substances.

Ecology currently regulates more than 9,500 systems at more than 3,600 facilities throughout the state. A majority of UST systems are located at gas stations. Others are owned and operated by other businesses and by local, state and federal governments.

Each year, about 50 new releases are confirmed at regulated UST facilities. The rule changes will help to reduce the number and severity of such releases.

The changes include:

- Authorizing Ecology to stop regulated substances from being delivered to UST systems that don’t comply with regulatory requirements.
- Requiring training for people who operate and maintain UST systems.
- Requiring secondary containment of tanks and pipes, and containment under dispenser systems.

Documents related to the proposed rule are posted at
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/reg/ust/2012/rule-making.html>.

Here's the schedule of public hearings:

- **April 24:** 1:30 p.m. at Ecology's Eastern Regional Office, 4601 N. Monroe St., Spokane.
- **April 25:** 1:30 p.m. at Ecology's Central Regional Office, 15 W. Yakima Ave., Yakima.
- **April 26:** 1:30 p.m. at Ecology's Northwest Regional Office, 3190 160th Ave. SE, Bellevue.
- **April 27:** 1:30 p.m. at Ecology's headquarters, 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey.

You can submit comments through May 4 by:

- Mailing them to Michael Feldcamp, Washington Department of Ecology, Toxics Cleanup Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600
- Sending email to USTrule@ecy.wa.gov.

This action is exempt from Gov. Chris Gregoire's executive order that suspends non-critical rule work. The proposed rule amendments are needed to maintain Ecology's federally delegated UST program and to continue to receive federal funding for the work.

See more information about the [rule suspension on Ecology's website](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/laws-rules/rulemaking_suspension.html) (http://www.ecy.wa.gov/laws-rules/rulemaking_suspension.html).

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Media Contact: Seth Preston, Ecology communications manager, 360-407-6848; 360-584-5744 cell; seth.preston@ecy.wa.gov

Ecology's website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>

Ecology's social media: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/about/newmedia.html>